

## Message Text

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FOLLOWING REPEAT VIENNA 334 ACTION SECSTATE 17 JAN QUOTE

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PFOR, CSCE, XG, AU, SHUM  
SUBJECT: AUSTRIAN PROPOSAL FOR PRIVATE EAST-WEST ROUND TABLE ON  
CSCE IN VIENNA, MARCH 25-26.

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: AUSTRIAN PARLIAMENTARIAN CZERNETZ INFORMED US JANUARY 14 HE HAS MOUNTED INITIATIVE FOR PRIVATE ROUND TABLE OF EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARIANS TO DISCUSS CSCE MATTERS, VIENNA, MARCH 25-26. ACCORDING TO CZERNETZ, COMMUNIST COUNTRIES WILL PROBABLY COME AND EUROPE COUNCIL COUNTRIES ARE ALSO LIKELY TO PARTICIPATE. BELATEDLY HE HAS ASKED FOR USG AND CONGRESSIONAL REACTION AND WHETHER US CONGRESS REPS MIGHT PARTICIPATE. AS INITIAL REACTION WE POINTED OUT TO HIM AND ALSO TO AUSTRIAN MFA OUR CONCERNS ABOUT TECHNICAL AND SUBSTANTIVE PROBLEMS SUCH GATHERING WOULD PRESENT FOR US AND THAT GUIDANCE FROM WASHINGTON WOULD BE REQUESTED.

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2. KARL CZERNETZ, CHAIRMAN OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE OF AUSTRIAN PARLIAMENT AND PRESIDENT OF PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF COUNCIL OF EUROPE (COE), INFORMED US JANUARY 14 THAT HE EXPECTS SOVIET UNION AND OTHER EAST EUROPEAN COMMUNIST STATES TO AGREE TO ACCEPT INVITATIONS TO A "ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION BETWEEN EUROPEAN POLITICANS FROM EAST AND WEST" IN THE CONTEXT OF THE FINAL ACT

OF HELSINKI TO BE HELD AT VIENNA MARCH 25-26, 1977.  
HE SAID MAYOR OF VIENNA, LEOPOLD GRATZ, HAD AGREED  
TO EXTEND FORMAL INVITATIONS TO REPRESENTATIVES OF  
POLITICAL LIFE FROM EUROPEAN STATES TAKING PART IN  
CSCE TO PRIVATE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS THAT WOULD NOT GIVE  
RISE TO ANY COMMITMENTS, TAKE ANY DECISIONS OR PASS  
ANY RESOLUTIONS. HE ASKED WHAT THE ATTITUDE OF USG  
WOULD BE TO SUCH A GATHERING AND WHETHER REPRESENTATIVES  
OF US CONGRESS WOULD AGREE TO ATTEND.

3. CZERNETZ SAID HIS INITIATIVE HAD GROWN OUT OF  
EFFORTS SINCE 1974 OF POLITICAL COMMITTEE OF COE  
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY TO ESTABLISH DIALOGUE BETWEEN  
EAST AND WEST AT PARLIAMENTARY LEVEL. UNTIL LATE LAST  
YEAR SOVIETS HAD REJECTED ALL SUCH OVERTURES ON BASIS  
THAT THEY DID NOT RECOGNIZE COE AND HAD ALSO TURNED  
A DEAF EAR TO PROPOSALS THAT DIALOGUE COULD TAKE PLACE  
OUTSIDE COE FRAMEWORK. CZERNETZ SAID THAT LAST OCTOBER,  
HOWEVER, DURING THIS VISIT TO WARSAW AS CHAIRMAN OF  
THE AUSTRIAN PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE (ALTHOUGH HE WAS  
ACCOMPANIED BY HIS COE CHEF DE CABINET, DR. MARCZAND,  
AND THE TRIP WAS PAID BY THE COE), INTERNATIONAL  
SECRETARY OF POLITBUREAU AND CHAIRMAN OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
COMMITTEE OF POLISH PARLIAMENT, DR. FRELIC, INDICATED  
EAST EUROPEAN COMMUNIST COUNTRIES HAD BEEN RECONSIDERING  
IDEA OF EAST-WEST ROUND TABLE AND WOULD PROBABLY ACCEPT  
INVITATIONS TO TWO-DAY MEETING AT VIENNA IN WHICH  
FIRST DAY WOULD BE DEVOTED TO GENERAL DISCUSSION OF  
HELSINKI FINAL ACT AND SECOND TO PRACTICAL PROBLEMS,  
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SUCH AS CULTURAL EXCHANGES, COOPERATION IN SCIENCE AND  
RESEARCH, ETC. FOLLOWING FURTHER SOUNDINGS WITH  
SOVIET AND OTHER EAST EUROPEAN DIPLOMATS IN VIENNA AND  
FURTHER CONSULTATIONS IN THE COE, CZERNETZ, AGAIN IN HIS  
AUSTRIAN PARLIAMENTARY CAPACITY, ON DECEMBER 6 ADDRESSED  
LETTERS (TEXT BY SEPTEL) TO AMBASSADORS OF ALL  
COMMUNIST COUNTRIES THAT PARTICIPATED IN CSCE AND TO  
PRESIDENT OF THE FINNISH PARLIAMENT (VIA FINNISH EMBASSY)  
SOLICITING VIEWS OF "APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES" IN THOSE  
COUNTRIES ABOUT POSSIBLE ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION AT  
VIENNA ON MARCH 25-26.

4. CZERNETZ SAID THE SOVIET COUNSELOR OF EMBASSY TOLD  
HIM JANUARY 4 THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WAS, IN GENERAL,  
FAVORABLE INCLINED TOWARD PROPOSED ROUND TABLE,  
ALTHOUGH SOME PROBLEMS (OTHERWISE UNSPECIFIED) MIGHT  
HAVE TO BE RESOLVED. CZERNETZ SAID THAT HE HAD NOT HEARD  
FURTHER FROM SOVIETS BUT THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO INQUIRE  
OF SOVIET COUNSELOR BEFORE DEPARTING FOR STRASBOURG

JANUARY 22 TO REPORT TO COE. CZERNETZ THEN ASKED WHETHER, IN EVENT OF AN AFFIRMATIVE SOVIET REPLY, AS EXPECTED, HE SHOULD INFORM SOVIETS THAT INVITATIONS WOULD BE EXTENDED TO PARLIAMENTS OF THE WEST EUROPEAN STATES, UNITED STATES AND CANADA. CZERNETZ SAID HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE PARTICULARLY HELPFUL IF HE COULD SAY THAT REPRESENTATIVES OF US CONGRESS WERE PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE AND ASKED WHETHER IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO HAVE US GOVERNMENT'S VIEWS ABOUT SUCH A ROUND TABLE AND AN INDICATION OF CONGRESS'S RESPONSE TO SUCH AN INVITATION BEFORE HE SAW THE SOVIET COUNSELOR.

5. EMBOFF REGISTERED SURPRISE THAT CZERNETZ AND COE HAD NOT CONSULTED EITHER USG REPRESENTATIVES OR US CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS DIRECTLY AT EARLIER STAGE. (CZERNETZ REPLIED RATHER LAMELY THAT CONGRESSIONAL OBSERVERS HAD NOT ATTENDED COE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY MEETING IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SEPTEMBER AND COE PARLIAMENTARIANS HAD THOUGH IT IMPOSSIBLE TO COORDINATE WITH USG AND CONGRESS DURING ELECTION CAMPAIGN.) EMBOFF NOTED FURTHER THAT CHANGE OF ADMINISTRATION WAS IMMINENT IN WASHINGTON AND EXPRESSED DOUBT THEREFORE THAT REPLIES FROM WASHINGTON COULD BE RECEIVED BEFORE JANUARY 22. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT EMBASSY WOULD CERTAINLY FORWARD HIS INQUIRY TO DEPARTMENT, ALONG WITH COPY OF TEXT OF HIS LETTER OF DECEMBER THAT HE HAD PROVIDED. EMBOFF ALSO NOTED STRONG USG OPPOSITION TO PAST SOVIET EFFORTS TO ENGAGE WEST EUROPEANS IN DISCUSSIONS OF SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE TO THE EXCLUSION OF US AND CANADA. IT WOULD, THEREFORE, CERTAINLY NOT BE APPROPRIATE FOR THE PROPOSED ROUND TABLE TO BE HELD WITHOUT INVITING AMERICAN AND CANADIAN PARTICIPATION OR TO LEAVE THE SOVIET COUNSELOR WITH IMPRESSION THAT ONLY EUROPEAN STATES, AS CZERNETZ LETTER HAD SEEMED TO IMPLY, WERE TO BE INVITED. EMBOFF POINTED OUT ALSO THAT US CONGRESS WAS SEPARATE AND EQUAL BRANCH OF US GOVERNMENT AND, WHATEVER EXECUTIVE BRANCH VIEWS OF THIS SPECIFIC INITIATIVE MIGHT BE, EXECUTIVE BRANCH COULD ONLY ADVISE CONGRESS OF ITS POSITION AND IN NO WAY INTERPOSE ITSELF BETWEEN ORGANIZERS OF SUCH A ROUND TABLE AND CONGRESS.

6. LATER SAME DAY (JANUARY 14) WE RAISED WITH SENIOR MFA OFFICIAL CZERNETZ'S INITIATIVE AND, AFTER SUMMARIZING CZERNETZ'S PRESENTATION TO US, REGISTERED SAME GENERAL POINTS AS HAD BEEN DONE WITH CZERNETZ (NO CONTACT WITH US IN EARLY STAGE OF INITIATIVE, ROUND TABLE CAST AS MEETING OF EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARIANS ON CSCE MATTERS,

EFFORTS OF SOVIETS IN PAST TO EXCLUDE US FROM SECURITY  
INTERESTS RE EUROPE). ADDITIONAL POINTS MADE WERE  
1) THAT US PARLIAMENTARIANS HAD TRIED EARLIER TO VISIT  
EE COUNTRIES AND SOVIET UNION FOR JUST SUCH CONVERSATIONS  
BUT WERE REFUSED VISAS; 2) THAT PROPOSED ROUND TABLE  
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UNLESS VERY CAREFULLY PREPARED COULD BECOME EE PROPAGANDA  
EXERCISE WHICH COULD PREJUDICE BELGRADE MEETINGS, AND  
3) THAT WHILE WE WOULD FORWARD TEXT OF CZERNETZ  
LETTER TO WASHINGTON, REACTION OF GOA TO CZERNETZ  
INITIATIVE WOULD BE HELPFUL FOR US ADMINISTRATION AND  
CONGRESS IN DEVELOPING POSITION.

7. MFA OFFICIAL INDICATED THAT MFA WAS ONLY AWARE IN  
GENERAL TERMS OF CZERNETZ'S INITIATIVE AND HAD IMPRESSION  
FROM CONVERSATION IN NOVEMBER THAT IT WAS UNLIKELY TO  
BE REALIZED, AS HAD EARLIER CZERNETZ EFFORT VIA IPU.  
SOURCE REGISTERED SOME SURPRISE THAT INITIATIVE HAD  
ADVANCED SO FAR AND THAT IN ADDITION CONTACT HAD BEEN  
ESTABLISHED AT SUCH LATE STAGE WITH USG. HIS COMMENTS  
SUGGESTED HE CONSIDERED CZERNETZ ENDEAVOR TO BE  
ILL-CONCEIVED AND HAPHAZARD UNDERTAKING. HE SAID HE  
WOULD DISCUSS MATTER WITH FOREIGN MINISTER UPON  
LATTER'S RETURN TO VIENNA AND BE IN TOUCH WITH US LATER  
WITH MORE FORMAL GOA REACTION.

8. ACTION REQUESTED: WE DO NOT INTEND AT THIS TIME TO  
RAISE CZERNETZ'S INITIATIVE WITH EUROPEAN DIPLOMATIC  
MISSIONS IN VIENNA SINCE WE ARE UNABLE TO GAUGE  
SERIOUSNESS OF SUPPORT IN WEST AND LIKELIHOOD OF  
SUCCESS OF CZERNETZ INITIATIVE. IN LATTER CONNECTION  
KEY FACTOR, IT SEEMS TO US, WILL BE REACTION OF EC-9  
AND US AND CANADA TO CZERNETZ PROPOSAL. EMBASSY  
WOULD THEREFORE APPRECIATE EARLY GUIDANCE ON  
ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESSIONAL VIEWS ON PROPOSED  
ROUND TABLE IN VIENNA. DEPARTMENT REQUESTED DISTRIBUTE  
THIS MESSAGE TO OTHER POSTS, AS APPROPRIATE. BUCHANAN  
UNQTE. VANCE

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## Message Attributes

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